

the faculty of music
university of toronto

in co-operation with

the canadian broadcasting corporation

presents

Janos Starker

cello

Shigeo Neriki

piano

macmillan theatre,
edward johnson building

8:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1977

PROGRAM

Adagio and Allegro from Sonata in A major

BOCCHERINI

Luigi Boccherini, born in Lucca in 1743 into a musical family, started off on a brilliant career as a young man in Rome where he was sent by his bass-playing father after initial studies at home. His selected favorite instrument was the cello, on which he became one of the most celebrated virtuoso performers of the late 18th century, traveling in Italy and later to France where, in Paris, at the age of 25, he became the talk of the town among musicians and connoisseurs of music alike.

Boccherini went to Germany in 1783 and became court composer to the cello-playing King Friedrich Wilhelm II who employed the artist exclusively in his palaces. This exclusivity might have been the reason that after the king's death he had to rebuild his career anew. He was then practically unknown to the international music world. After some very successful years of concertizing, however, he concentrated on composing and gave up playing the cello because of ill health.

Boccherini must be considered as one of the two leading figures in the development of modern chamber music; his formative influence was surpassed only by that of Joseph Haydn. His style remained throughout proper and clean. His melodic inventiveness is always pleasant and at times even noble. Being such a superb virtuoso cellist himself, Boccherini used his favorite string instrument, up to then quite unknown to the musical world of his time, in a prominent way.

Since Boccherini's style was complementary to that of Haydn, and because of its "feminine" character, a fellow townsman, the violinist and composer Giuseppe Puppo called Boccherini "the wife of Haydn." Haydn and Boccherini admired and corresponded with one another.

Sonata in G minor, Op. 65

CHOPIN

Allegro moderato

Scherzo

Largo

Finale: Allegro

The first question we might ask is why Chopin, whose entire output was almost entirely devoted to music for the piano or piano and orchestra, should, at a late stage of his brief career, turn his attention to writing a substantial work for the cello. There is a straightforward answer: simply that one of his best friends was the cellist Auguste-Joseph Franchomme. We might speculate beyond this that Chopin, almost the model of 19th century romanticism, felt that the stringed instruments were capable of even deeper expression than his beloved piano and, having Franchomme at his elbow to help, decided to make his experiments with the cello. It was to be one of his last major works—the Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61 and Barcarolle were written about the same time—but after this there were only a few minor works before he died in 1849.

The Cello Sonata has indeed a concerto-like opening, the piano echoing the orchestral writing in his piano concertos. The cello has a richness of wonderful melodies while the sonata development is well handled and came in for special praise in this respect from noted musicologist

Donald E. Tovey. The writing for the cello shows Chopin's understanding of the instrument and his friend's advice well taken. The second movement, a Scherzo, has a particularly poignant melody, marked cantabile, as its middle section, followed by a clever precis of the first part. The glorious Largo is pure romanticism, beauty for its own sake, a splendid and memorable, if somber melody. The whole is capped by a remarkable final movement which emphasizes again how rewarding a work this is for the cellist yet with the pianist getting his fair share of the honors.

— INTERMISSION —

Suite No. 3 in C major for unaccompanied cello

BACH

Praeludium
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrée I and II
Gigue

J. S. Bach was born at Eisenach, Germany, in 1685 and died in 1750. His six suites for cello alone belong to the "Coethen period" (around 1720) along with some of the violin sonatas. They all have six separate movements. The fifth is a double movement, similar in structure to the later menuettes and scherzos. With the exception of the fifth movement, which is a menuette in Suite No. 1 (G major), and a bourée in No. 3 (C major), the other five movements of the suites are called identically, — Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue. With the exception of the Prelude these movements are named after, and based on, dances of different national origin. Bach raised the suite to the highest form of art, while preserving its character as a collection of dance pieces.

Notes by Janos Starker

First Rhapsody (1928)

BARTOK

Lassu — Moderato
Friss — Allegretto Moderato

The year 1928 was one of great productivity for Bartok and, along with much else, he wrote two Rhapsodies for Violin and Piano — both of which he arranged for violin and orchestra as well as cello and piano.

The Rhapsody No. 1 is dedicated to Joseph Szigeti, with whom the composer played it at a Coolidge Festival concert on his second — and permanent — removal to this country in 1940. It is an engaging and approachable work based on Hungarian folk tunes, one of which bears startling resemblance to the Shaker hymn so familiar through Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. The rhapsody is divided into the traditional 'lassu' and 'friss' (slow and quick) sections of the typical national Hungarian dance.

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